

Robert Garnier's *Bradamante* (1582): An English Translation of Act IV, With an
Introduction Concerning the Historical Development of the Title Character

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

The title character of Robert Garnier's *Bradamante* (1582) was introduced to French literature through the *matière de France* (Matter of France), epic poems written during the Middle Ages. The personage of Bradamante was expanded over time into that of the greatest female knight, whose exploits were chronicled by the Italian writers Matteo Maria Boiardo (*Orlando Innamorato*, 1495) and Ludovico Ariosto (*Orlando Furioso*, 1532). It is from Ariosto's epic that Garnier took the material for his tragicomedy, repatriating the fierce and chivalrous Bradamante into French literature and using the story of her battle against Saracen knights as an allegory for the political turbulence of France in the late sixteenth century. The character of Bradamante has continued to inspire a variety of authors, from seventeenth-century playwrights to operatic composers, and even a children's author at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

In addition to an introduction that explores the development of Bradamante as a literary figure, I have also written an English translation of Act IV of Garnier's *Bradamante*. Translation in general is like walking a tightrope: Faithfulness to the source language, readability in the target language, word choice and grammatical structure must all be weighed and the right balance must be struck. Transforming Garnier's Middle French from Alexandrine verse into sufficiently literary English prose proved to be as challenging as it was rewarding. I have included the French text published edited by Raymond Lebègue in *Robert Garnier. Les Juifves. Bradamante. Poésies diverses* (1949) for comparison.

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From a twenty-first-century vantage point, the life and works of Robert Garnier are best described as paradoxical. In spite of having been lauded as the only name “which can properly be called great to literary history,”¹ vis-à-vis classical tragedy, as well as “the finest 16th-century writer of tragedy,”² the exact dates of his birth and death have been lost. In fact, “there is a difference of eleven years between the two dates most commonly assigned to his birth, and ten years between those assigned to his death.”³ Although his plays were said to have “[surpassed] the very finest”⁴ examples of Greek and Latin drama, Garnier was also criticized for penning lengthy soliloquies, such as the “unbroken monologue of nearly two hundred lines [...] inflicted on the hapless spectators”⁵ of his *Hippolyte* (1573). Of his eight published plays, the final two are cited as his greatest creations; but *Bradamante* (1582) and *Les Juives* (1583) are as different from one another as they are from the previous six. Nevertheless, Garnier revisits several themes throughout his plays, including the social and psychological effects of war, the importance of nationalism, and the Christian imperative of salvation. Nowhere are these elements more skillfully combined than in *Bradamante*. This play and the historical development of its title character demand particular examination, but a fundamental understanding of Garnier’s masterpiece can be achieved by first examining the life and development of the playwright himself.

Garnier’s Life and Career

Robert Garnier was born in the medieval city of La Ferté-Bernard in 1545, the date adopted by Henri Chardon, a nineteenth-century biographer of Garnier, after

considerable research.⁶ Some texts state that little is known of his early life, while others seem to draw conclusions from his works and observations of the Maine province. He was a lawyer by training, having studied in Toulouse from 1563 to 1566. It was in Toulouse that Garnier first met Pierre de Ronsard. During this time he also participated in the *Jeux Floraux*, “a poetic competition [...] at which the prizes were gold and silver flowers.”⁷ Garnier placed second in 1564 and won top honors two years later. In 1567, he moved to Paris, passed the bar, and became an *avocat en la cour de Parlement* for two years. Garnier “soon came into contact with the members of the *Pléiade*, the most brilliant literary group of the century, and the most important in its influence on French literature.”⁸ At this time he reconnected with, and came to admire, Ronsard as a mentor; he also associated with other writers of the *Pléiade*, such as Joachim du Bellay, Étienne Jodelle, and Jean Dorat.

The poet-jurist continued to hone his talents and win admirers in both law and letters. In 1569, he returned to Maine and became *conseiller du roi au siège présidial et sénéchaussée*, the king’s counselor in the Présidial (judicial tribunal) and the Sénéchaussée (regional office of justice and administrative control).⁹ In 1572, the St. Bartholomew Day massacre took place in Paris and elsewhere in France. The Roman Catholic mob violence and assassinations directed at French Protestants were ordered by Catherine de Medici, mother of King Charles IX.¹⁰ It is easy to understand the difficult obligation Garnier faced “to administer justice with impartiality during these years of religious wars in France”.¹¹ In 1574, he became a judge in the criminal court, deputy president of the city assembly in Le Mans, and chief justice of the entire county of Maine, “apparently through the direct intervention of the king.”¹²

He held these offices until 1586, when Henri III recalled him to Paris to serve as a member of the *Grand Conseil*, the body responsible for the country's legal and judicial affairs. According to Henri Chardon, Garnier lived another four years, dying at Le Mans in 1590. His wife Françoise Hubert predeceased him by two years, and he was survived by two daughters.

In the midst of an increasingly demanding and wide-reaching judicial responsibility, Garnier composed his eight tragic plays, published between 1568 and 1583. As previously mentioned, the first six differ from the final two in several ways. Whereas *Porcie* (1568), *Hippolyte*, *Cornélie* (1574), *Marc Antoine* (1578), *La Troade* (1579), and *Antigone* (1580) are based on Greek and Roman history and mythology, the setting and characters of *Bradamante* are taken from Ludovico Ariosto's epic *Orlando Furioso* (1532). Moreover, *Les Juives* borrows from the Bible, especially the Psalms. *Bradamante* is further distanced from the other works in that it lacks the chorus of classical theater, although Garnier notes in his preface that "the manager is requested to have the want supplied in case of its being acted".¹³ Finally, there is the label of "tragicomedy", used for the first time in reference to *Bradamante*¹⁴, which simultaneously isolates it from Garnier's other works and elevates it to the standard of being "remarkable" and "of no small importance."¹⁵ This last point will be examined in another introduction.

The Origins of Bradamante: Medieval France and Renaissance Italy

The personage of Bradamante was first presented in the *matière de France* (Matter of France), *chansons de geste* (songs of heroic deeds), and other epic

literature first produced in the Middle Ages. Popular subjects included Charlemagne, King of the Franks, and his paladins or peers who were considered “[residents] of the palace and companions of the king.”¹⁶ Roland is the most celebrated paladin; his *Chanson de Roland* is the national epic of France, and he is the title character of Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, Orlando being the Italian version of the name. Tales of war between Christians and Saracens, the medieval term for Muslims, were a favorite subject. *Les Quatres Fils Aymon* appeared in the 13th century, and it introduced the character of Renaud, an enemy of Charlemagne after he killed one of the king’s nephews. Over time, however, such details were “thrust into the background, and many episodes were added, as well as the personage of the hero’s sister, Bradamante.”¹⁷ It is difficult to be more exact about her origins.

The figure of Bradamante may have been outlined in medieval France, but the details of her personality, her desires and her strength, were augmented during the early Italian Renaissance. It was the poet Matteo Maria Boiardo (1440/41-1494), author of *Orlando Innamorato*, who wrote the first work “to combine elements of both Arthurian and Carolingian traditions of romance, [giving] new life to the chivalrous epic, which was declining in popularity.”¹⁸ The epic’s 46 cantos interweave multiple storylines, one of which presents “Ruggiero and Bradamante [...] purported founders of the Estense dynasty [...] as perfect knights destined to a life of service.”¹⁹ In fact, Boiardo depicts Bradamante as “a female warrior, in prowess equal to the best of knights.”²⁰ She and Ruggiero are separated for the majority of the epic, one constantly in pursuit of the other, with Bradamante at one point rescuing her future husband from the island of the enchantress Alcina, aided

by a magical ring. Some have suggested that Boiardo favored Ruggiero's tale from the start: the narrator of the *Innamorato* announces his arrival to the story as "more important matters"²¹ than Orlando's exploits before the end of the first canto.

Boiardo categorizes Bradamante as "a young strong soldier of the Christian faith who is completely dedicated to the well-being of her king and Christian people."²² He refers to her as a "valorous" woman, one who leads all of Charlemagne's troops into battle against the chief of the Saracen army.²³

Boiardo never finished his *Innamorato*, and it was not published until after his death. Three decades later, the first edition of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* was published, a reworking of Boiardo's interwoven storylines in addition to "the vital personality of the author [...] enlivening and unifying the whole work [...] endlessly teasing his readers and dropping casual asides about his contemporaries."²⁴ Bradamante is introduced in the second canto as the assigned protector of the city of Montpellier. Throughout the text she is variously "lovely," "angry as a viper," "spirited," and "a fearsome gust of wind which churns the billowing seas."²⁵ Ultimately, it is the interference of Bradamante's parents, Aymon and Beatrix, that threatens to drive her to suicide if she is not permitted to marry Ruggiero, the half-Muslim knight.

Garnier's *Bradamante*

Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, in spite of its considerable bulk, seems always to be in motion, switching from one group or character without warning, sometimes summarizing unseen action for the sake of focusing on a battle or another series of

events. In Garnier's *Bradamante*, the action is less frenetic and more respectful of the *trois unités* (unities of time, action, and place) implied by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Indeed, Act IV contains several sizeable soliloquies, such as La Montagne's 85-line description of the battle between Roger and Bradamante (4.1.1037), or the 45 lines Roger spends cursing his misery (4.2), which seem to stop the action altogether. However:

The principle of 'stopping to sing' is contrary only to a rather narrow conception of drama, that which demands that every speech should in some way advance the action. [...] It may serve to crystallize the character's intentions. But even when it serves only to confirm a state of mind which is already known, [...] it has a legitimate place in a play since it gives the audience an opportunity of savouring a situation and of identifying itself more closely with the emotions of the character.²⁶

Bradamante appears in the third scene of the act, where she laments her defeat at the hand of Leon, who was in fact Roger in disguise. She asks herself "where is your warrior's bravery? Where is your vigor and your inborn strength?" [*où est ta prouesse guerriere ? / Où est plus ta vigueur & ta force premiere ?*] (4.3.1177). As the act progresses, lengthy monologues give way to stichomythia, or fast-paced dialogue in split verse. A plan is developed to delay the impending wedding of Leon and Bradamante, which also creates time to locate Roger. The act closes with Leon wishing to locate his impersonator, so that he can be returned to the tournament hall for another battle.

For much of the act, Bradamante serves as an object rather than an agent. Her parents and confidantes make decisions and create diversions in her name but, aside from her soliloquy in the third scene, “[s]he is saying nothing” [*Elle ne répond rien*] (4.5.1377). Even the reader must learn of her exhausting battle against Roger through La Montagne’s report, rather than Bradamante sharing a firsthand account.

Bradamante after Garnier

Western literature has continued to find inspiration in the character of Bradamante, in her unmatched bravery and valor, her religious conviction, and the relentless pursuit of her heart’s desire. However, one must also consider that:

It has rarely fallen to the lot of an author who shone with the brilliance of a star of the first magnitude in his own days, to undergo such a profound eclipse as has obscured the name of Robert Garnier during the past three centuries.²⁷

Historical evidence suggests that Garnier’s *Bradamante* was not performed in the French court until after his death. Furthermore, some qualify *Bradamante* as being “easily the most outstanding”²⁸ example of French tragicomedy, rather than the first.

The century following Garnier’s death saw the creation of two additional five-act plays based on Ariosto’s female knight. The first, la Calprenède’s *La Bradamante* (1637), calls itself a *tragicomédie* and involves many of Garnier’s characters, in addition to a French lord and a friend for Leon. Perhaps more famous is Thomas Corneille’s *Bradamante* (1680), a strict *tragédie* which begins with the title

character speaking to her confidante in order to set the scene.²⁹ Garnier seems to have written his *Bradamante* as a metaphor for France's then-turbulent political climate:

Henry III's prestige was continuing to decline. Pamphleteers continued to stir up hatred against him and his government. The breakdown of negotiations for the marriage of Anjou to Elizabeth of England, the defeat of Strozzi and the French fleet off the Azores by the Marquis of Santa-Cruz, were blows to national pride. Garnier seems to be trying to remedy this low state of national self-respect [...] by praising France and stressing her world-wide renown.³⁰

His successors lack a similar impetus. In fact, some historians argue that Corneille, younger brother to Pierre, based his play on the work of la Calprenède rather than on Garnier's.³¹ No matter the inspiration, it cannot be denied that Robert Garnier was the first to repatriate the exploits of *Bradamante* from the Italian poets to France.

In 1735, George Frederic Handel premiered *Alcina*, the composer's "last operatic success."³² The anonymous libretto is a direct borrowing from Ariosto, as Ruggiero arrives at Alcina's island, and *Bradamante* follows to rescue him. Her first aria possesses "a tough air of self-righteousness [...] she scarcely emerges as a sympathetic figure."³³ Because *Bradamante* arrives at the island covered in armor, she is mistaken for a man and goes by the name of one of her brothers. Her music, written for a mezzo-soprano, "could perfectly well represent a man [...] vocally,"

which “introduces sexual complications almost *de rigueur* in [period opera] and not quite the absurdity they may seem today.”³⁴ Within a few years of its premier, *Alcina* fell into obscurity and was not revived until the 20th century. Recently, however, Italian director Franco Zeffirelli and American soprano Renée Fleming have been involved in productions of the opera, indicating a renewed appreciation of the *opera seria* genre, and perhaps attesting to an enduring interest in the character of Bradamante.

The female knight is also a principal character in Italo Calvino’s *The Nonexistent Knight* (1959; English translation in 1962). The title is a reference to Agilulf, an empty suit of stainless white armor who moves, speaks, and precisely executes his duties through sheer force of will. Calvino introduces Bradamante anonymously, as periwinkle-clad knight who comes to the aid of a novice warrior named Raimbaut. The scene establishes her prowess in battle, but when Raimbaut discovers his ally “naked from the waist downwards and running barefoot over rocks in the stream [...] looking for a suitable spot [to begin] quietly and proudly to pee,”³⁵ the reader encounters a heretofore unseen side of Bradamante.

When the half-nude warrior discovers she is being watched, she attacks him “not with the gesture of a perfect manager of weapons that she was, but with the impetus of a furious woman.”³⁶ Just as Agilulf is a walking contradiction, the rule-bound knight/empty suit of armor, Calvino’s Bradamante is a “little paladiness”³⁷ full of “love for all that [is] strict, exact, severe, conforming to moral rule” who, “having been brought up a princess,”³⁸ refuses to sweep, sew, or maintain her tent.

Eventually Sister Theodora, who is writing this tale of Charlemagne's Christian knights from a convent, is revealed to be Bradamante. Over the course of the novel she loves and loses the nonexistent knight, deciding finally to pursue Raimbaut, whom she initially spurned. The story concludes with Bradamante trading her habit for armor, mounting the future's horse for another adventure.

More recently, in 2000, American author Jane Yolen collected a series of tales and legends from around the world, all featuring "sword-wielding, spear-throwing, villain-stomping, rescuing-type heroes who also happen to be female" as a gift to her daughter and granddaughter.³⁹ Growing up, Yolen reveals she would pretend to be "King Arthur or Merlin or Lancelot because [she] didn't know about Bradamante."⁴⁰ Yolen chooses two tales, Bradamante's fierce battle with Rodomonte and her quest to free Ruggiero from the enchanter's castle, to display her strength, wit, and devotion to her love. Far from being a damsel in distress, Yolen's Bradamante is a faithful reproduction of Boiardo's and Ariosto's creation, fierce and faithful.

Conclusions

The character of Bradamante has undergone a sort of identity crisis. Invented by the French in some early heroic tale, the female knight was rediscovered, embraced, and celebrated by the epics of two writers of the Italian Renaissance. Within fifty years, the more popular work had inspired a French tragicomedy preoccupied with ideas of patriotism, religious devotion, love, and family. While Robert Garnier did not originate Bradamante, he effectively reintroduced her to French literature, repackaging her and her travails into a straightforward, five-act

play, both admired and emulated. Although other writers have emerged and assumed the superlatives once bestowed on Garnier, his works do survive and continue to attract the interest of both historians and audiences.

Difficulties of Translation

Working alone as a first-time translator would have certainly doomed my efforts early on in the process. Instead, weekly meetings with other students in the translation group allowed me to compare my interpretation of a word or grammatical structure against someone else's, which occasionally required me to defend why I made the decision I did. The need to justify my choices helped me clarify my point of view as a translator, and define the type of text I hoped to create.

As I translated Act IV, orthography posed the greatest challenge to understanding Garnier's work. Half-formed words (*ja* for *déjà*, *heur* for *bonheur*), missing accents, and vowel substitution (*y* for *i* in words such as *loy*, *roy*, *luy*, *feray*, etc.) were difficult to understand at first, but in the case of *loy* and *luy*, reading the words revealed their meaning. Randle Cotgrave's *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (1611) became my Rosetta Stone for much of the text. Failing this, the University of Chicago's digitized *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1634) would usually reveal a solution.

I would caution against embracing cognates unquestioningly. Besides translating between languages, in the case of *Bradamante*, one must also translate between eras. On several occasions our group found that a word in Middle French, while still used in modern English, had shifted in meaning, so that retaining it would make the translation less accurate. *Magnanime* appears several times in *Bradamante*, and seems simply to indicate "great," whereas the English *magnanimous* refers to "a lofty and courageous spirit" or "nobility of feeling and

generosity of mind.”⁴¹ The staggering number of synonyms in English can makes finding *le mot juste* a difficult proposition, but ultimately such flexibility is appreciated when a variety of concerns (accuracy, metaphor, alliteration, word play, brevity) must be addressed in a given passage.

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Act III. Scene I.

LA MONTAGNE, AYMON, BEATRIX.

LA MONTAGNE.

1015 Qui eust jamais pensé que ce prince de Grece
Eust en luy tant de cœur, tant de force, et d'adresse,
Veu qu'il n'estoit cogneu des Paladins François,
Et qu'on prise assez peu les armes des Gregeois :
Toutefois il est brave et vaillant au possible,
Son ame est genereuse et sa force invincible.

AYMON.

Que dit ce gentilhomme ?

LA MONTAGNE.

1020 Il est Cesar de nom,
Mais il l'est maintenant de faict et de renom.

AYMON.

C'est de Leon qu'il parle, escoutons-le un peu dire.

LA MONTAGNE.

Chacun luy fait honneur, tout le monde l'admire.

AYMON.

Il a doncques vaincu : nous voyla hors d'ennuy.

LA MONTAGNE.

Certe il est digne d'elle autant qu'elle de luy.

BEATRIX.

1025 Arraisonnons-le un peu.

AYMON.

J'en ay fort grand'envie.
Et quoy ? nostre bataille est elle ja finie ?

LA MONTAGNE.

C'en est fait.

AYMON.

Et qui gagne ?

Act III. Scene I.

LA MONTAGNE, AYMON, BEATRIX.

LA MONTAGNE.

Who would have ever thought this prince of Greece
Had so much courage, so much strength, and skill,
Seeing as he was not known by the French paladins,¹
And that one does not really respect Greek defenses;
However, he is as brave and valiant as possible;
His soul is generous and his strength is invincible.

AYMON.

What does this gentleman say ?

LA MONTAGNE.

He is Caesar by name,
Also, he is now Caesar in fact and deed.

AYMON.

He is talking about Leon. Let us listen to him for a moment.

LA MONTAGNE.

Every man knows and admires him.

AYMON.

So he was successful in battle: Here we are beyond danger.

LA MONTAGNE.

Certainly he is as worthy of her as she is of him.

BEATRIX.

Let us give it some thought.

AYMON.

I would like it very much.
What now ? Is our battle already over ?

LA MONTAGNE.

It is over.

AYMON.

And who wins ?

LA MONTAGNE.

Ils ont egal honneur.

AYMON.

Egal ? comment cela ?

LA MONTAGNE.

Mais Leon est vainqueur.

AYMON.

Hà que j'en ay de joye !

BEATRIX.

Et moy que j'en suis aise !

AYMON.

1030 Je ne sçaurois ouir chose qui tant me plaise !
Mais de grace contez comme tout s'est passé.

LA MONTAGNE.

Autour du camp estoit tout le peuple amassé,
Et Charles devisoit avec les preux de France,
Quand les deux champions après la reverence
1035 Se plantent opposez l'un à l'autre, aux deux bouts,
L'un attisé d'amour, et l'autre de courroux.
Un pennache ondoyoit sur leurs brillantes armes,
Chacun prisoit le port de ce pair de gendarmes,
Leur demarche et leur grace : ils sembloient deux Soleils,
1040 Ils paroissoient en force et proïesse pareils.
Ils firent quelque pause aux portes des barrières,
S'entrœillant l'un l'autre au travers des visieres :
Et ressembloit la vierge, au mouvoir de son corps,
Un genereux cheval qu'on retient par le mors,
1045 Trop ardent de la course : et qui, l'oreille droite,
La narine tendue et la bouche mouëte,
Frappe du pié la terre, et marchant ça et là,
Monstre l'impatience et la fureur qu'il a.
La voix ne fut si tost de la tompette ouye,
1050 Que l'espee en la main elle court resjouye
Contre son adversaire, et semble à l'approcher
D'une tourmente esmeue encontre un grand rocher.
L'autre marche à grands pas, et plus grave, ne montre
Avoir tant de fureur qu'elle, à ce dur rencontre :

LA MONTAGNE.

They are equally glorious.

AYMON.

Equal? How is that?

LA MONTAGNE.

But Leon is the victor.

AYMON.

And I am very glad about it!

BEATRIX.

As for me, I am delighted!

AYMON.

I have not heard anything so pleasing before!
But please, report on everything that has transpired.

LA MONTAGNE.

Around the camp everyone gathered,
And Charles conversed with the valiant knights of France
When the two champions, after showing respect to each other,
Stood facing one another, at each end,
One fueled by love, the other by wrath.
Plumage² waved on their shining armor;
Everyone respected this pair of military men,
Their carriage and their elegance. They seemed like two suns,
Appearing equal in strength and prowess.
They paused briefly at the gates,
Glancing at one another through their visors.
The maiden resembled, in the movement of her body,
A noble steed that one restrains by the bit,
Too fiery for the track. And, with raised ear,
Flared nostril, and gaping maw,
Striking its foot to the ground, bucking here and there,
It shows the impatience and fury that she possesses.
No sooner is the sound of the trumpet heard
That he runs, rejoicing, with sword in hand
Toward her adversary, seeming to approach him
As a tempest churns against a large rock.
The other walks in strides, resolute, not showing
As much fury as she in this rude encounter.

1055 Il saque au poing l'espee, et destourne et soustient
 Les grands coups qu'elle rue, et ferme se maintient.
 Comme une forte tour, sur le rivage assise,
 Par les vagues battue, et par la froide Bise,
 Ne s'en esbranle point, dure contre l'effort
 1060 De l'orage qui bruit et tempeste si fort,
 Ainsi luy, sans ployer sous l'ardente furie
 Et les aspres assauts de sa douce ennemie,
 Qui chamaille sans cesse, ores haut, ores bas,
 Par le chef, par le col, par les flancs, par les bras,
 1065 Ne s'esmeut de la charge, ains s'avance, ou se tourne,
 Ou recule en arriere, et le malheur destourne.
 Il s'arreste par fois, et par fois s'avançant,
 De la main et du pié se va comme elançant :
 Puis soudain se retire, et jette la rudache
 1070 Au devant de l'espee et rend le coup plus lasche.
 Il tire peu souvent, et encores ses coups,
 Comme en feinte tirez, sont debiles et mous :
 Il prend garde à frapper où sa dextre ne nuise,
 Et là par grande adresse à tous les coups il vise :
 1075 Mais elle s'en courrouce, et ce courtois devoir
 Fait redoubler sa haine, ainsi qu'il semble à voir.
 Tantost fiert du trenchant, et tantost de la pointe
 Elle cherche où l'armure est à l'armure jointe,
 Elle voltige, et tourne incessamment la main,
 1080 Le sonde en tous endroits, mais son labeur est vain.
 Comme un qui pour forcer une ville travaille,
 Ceinte de grands fossez et d'espaisse muraille,
 De toutes parts flanquée, ore fait son effort
 Contre un gros boulevard, ou contre un autre fort :
 1085 Ore bat une tour, ore assaut une porte,
 Ore donne escalade à la muraille forte,
 S'attaque à tous endroits, en vain essaye tout,
 Il y perd ses soldats et n'en vient point à bout.
 La vierge ainsi se peine, et tant moins elle espere
 1090 Vaincre son ennemi, d'autant plus se colere,
 D'autant plus fait d'effort : le feu sort de ses coups,
 Et ne scauroit briser mailles, lames, ne clous.
 En fin elle se lasse, et halette de peine,
 Elle fond en sueur et se met hors d'haleine :
 1095 La main luy devient foible, et ne peut plus tenir
 L'indigne coutelace, et l'escu soutenir.
 La force luy défaut : mais la colere aigue,

He quickly draws his sword, turns around, and withstands
 The heavy blows she lets fly, remaining steady.
 Like a mighty tower, situated on the shore,
 Battered by the waves and by the cold North Wind,³
 He does not weaken at all, steadfast against the effort
 Of the rumbling storm and such strong gales.
 Thus, without bending under the burning fury
 And harsh assaults of his tender enemy
 Who strikes relentlessly, first here, now there,
 The head, the neck, the sides, the arms;
 He does not flinch under the burden, neither advancing or turning,
 Or recoiling backward, and misfortune is averted.
 Sometimes she stops, and sometimes she advances,
 From hand and foot she goes as if piercing:
 Then suddenly she withdraws, throws the shield
 In front of the sword, and weakens the blow.
 He strikes less frequently, and yet his blows,
 Like feigned blows, are weak and soft:
 He takes care to strike where her right hand cannot be hurt,
 And there, with great direction, he lands all his blows:
 But she becomes enraged, and this courteous endeavor
 Intensifies her hate, as much as he can see.
 Sometimes using the sword's edge, and sometimes the tip,
 She searches for the seams in his armor;
 She jumps around, and turns her hand incessantly,
 Probing in every place, but her effort is futile.
 As one who, toiling to overcome a village
 Enclosed by deep ditches and thick walls,
 Flanked on every side, now focuses his effort
 Against a large rampart, or against another fort:
 Now he batters a tower, now he assaults a door,
 Now he climbs up the sturdy wall,
 Attacking everywhere, vainly trying everything,
 Losing his soldiers there and not reaching the end.
 The maiden toils as well, and so much less she hopes
 To defeat her enemy, yet she becomes much more angry,
 Making more of an effort: Fire comes from her blows,
 And she knew to break the chainmail, swords, and nails.
 Finally she grows tired, and pants in pain;
 She breaks into a sweat and loses her breath.
 Her hand becomes weak; it can no longer hold
 The unworthy cutlass⁴ or support the shield.
 Her strength wastes away, but her rage is acute:

La honte et le despit de se trouver vaincue,
 Luy renfle le courage : et laschant le pavois
 1100 Prend à deux mains l'espee, et bat sur le harnois
 Comme sur une enclume au milieu d'une forge,
 Où quelque grand Cyclope un corps d'armures forge.
 Ses coups drus et pesans passent l'humain pouvoir,
 La force luy redouble avec le desespoir :
 1105 D'ahan elle se courbe, et semble avoir envie
 De perdre en cet effort la victoire et la vie.
 Leon frais et dispos comme en ayant pitié,
 Pour finir ce combat, entrepris d'amitié,
 Commence à la presser, la suivre, la contraindre,
 1110 Feint redoubler ses coups, sans toutefois l'atteindre,
 La poursuit, la resserre, il la pousse et la poind,
 Et lasse la reduit jusques au dernier point.
 Charles fait le signal, et Leon se retire :
 Bradamante fremist de dueil, de honte, et d'ire.
 1115 Le Conseil s'assembla, qui, de Charles requis,
 Dit que Leon avoit Bradamante conquis,
 Qu'il la devoit avoir pour legitime espouse.

AYMON.

Et que dit l'Empereur?

LA MONTAGNE.

Qu'il entend qu'il l'espouse.

AYMON.

O Dieu, que de ta main les faits sont merveilleux !
 1120 Tu as ore abatu le cœur des orgueilleux :
 Bradamante a trouvé maintenant qui la donte.

BEATRIX.

Elle n'en faisoit cas.

AYMON.

Mais elle en avoit honte.

Je vay trouver le Roy, pour ensemble adviser
 De l'endroit et du jour de les faire espouser.

The shame and anger of finding herself defeated
 Inflates her courage once more; and, letting go of her shield,
 She takes the sword in two hands, and beats on the armor
 As if on an anvil in the middle of a forge,
 Where some large Cyclops casts a suit of armor.
 Her rapid and heavy blows go beyond human ability:
 Strength intensifies with despair.
 She doubles over in suffering, and seems to want,
 By this endeavor, to lose the upper hand and her life.
 Leon, fresh as ever and pitying his opponent,
 In order to finish this battle undertaken by friendship,
 Begins to crowd, follow, and to overcome her.
 Pretending to increase his blows, without making contact,
 He pursues her, squeezes her, bears down upon and pins her;
 He x x x her tired until the last second.
 Charles gives the signal, and Leon withdraws;
 Bradamante trembles with grief, shame, and anger.
 The Council convened, and by Charles' request,
 declared that Leon had conquered Bradamante,
 And that he ought to have her as his rightful wife.

AYMON.

And what does the Emperor say?

LA MONTAGNE.

He hears that Leon is marrying her.

AYMON.

O God, how marvelous are the deeds done by Your hand!
 You have beaten the heart of the greedy:
 Bradamante has now found the one who tames her.

BEATRIX.

She did not think much of it.

AYMON.

But she was ashamed.

I am going to find the king, and together we shall decide
 The time and place to marry them.

SCENE II

ROGER.

- 1125 Gouffres des creux enfers, Tenariens rivages,
Ombres, Larves, Fureurs, Monstres, Démon, et Rages,
Arrachez moy d'ici pour me rouïer là bas :
Tous tous à moy venez, et me tendez les bras,
Je sens plus de douleurs, je souffre plus de peines
- 1130 Qu'on n'en sçauroit souffrir sur vos dolentes plaines.
Je suis au desespoir, je suis plein de fureur,
Je ne projette en moy que desastre et qu'horreur :
Je ne veux plus du jour, j'ay sa lampe odieuse,
Je veux chercher des nuits la nuit la plus ombreuse,
- 1135 Un lieu le plus sauvage et le plus escarté
Qui se trouve sur terre, un rocher deserté,
Solitaire, effroyable, où sans destourbier d'homme
Le duel, l'amour, la rage, et la faim me consomme.
Où me puis-je laver de l'horrible forfait ,
- 1140 Que j'ay, monstre execrable, à ma Maïstresse fait ?
Je l'ay prise de force, et de force ravie
A moy, à son amour, et à sa propre vie,
Pour la donner en proye, et en faire seigneur
(Ingrate cruauté !) son principal haineur ?
- 1145 O terre, ouvre ton sein ! ô ciel, lasche ton foudre,
Et mon parjure chef broye soudain en poudre !
J'ay madame conquise, et un autre l'aura :
J'ay gaigné la victoire, un autre en bravera.
Ainsi pour vous, taureaux, vous n'escorchez la plaine,
- 1150 Ainsi pour vous, moutons, vous ne portez la laine,
Ainsi, mousches, pour vous aux champs vous ne ruche,
Ainsi pour vous, oiseaux, aux bois vous ne nichez.
Hâ regret eternal, crevecœur, jalousie,
Dont ma detestable ame est justement saisie !
- 1155 Mourons tost, depeschons, ne tardons plus ici,
Allons voir des Enfers le Royaume noirci :
Je n'ay plus que du mal et des langueurs au monde,
Ce qu'il ha de plaisir à douleur me redonde.
Adieu cuirace, armet, cuissots, grèves, brassars,
- 1160 Adieu rudache, espee, outils sanglans de Mars,
Dont le Troyen Hector s'arma jadis en guerre :
Je ne vous verray plus devalé sous la terre.
Et vous, Maïstresse, adieu, adieu, Maïstresse, hélas !
Pardonnez moy ma coulpe, et n'y repensez pas.

SCENE II

ROGER.

- Whirlpools in the caves of Hades, the banks of Cape Matapan,⁵
Shadows, Spirits, Furies, Monsters, Demons, and blind passion:
Uproot me from this place to break me upon the wheel.⁶
All of them, all of them come to me, reach out your arms to me.
I feel more sadness, I suffer more pain
Than one could suffer on your sorrowful plains.
I am in despair, I am full of rage,
I forecast for myself only disaster and dread:
I no longer want daylight, I possess its loathsome lamp:
I want to seek out each night the darkest night,
The wildest, most faraway place
To be found on Earth: A rock that is deserted,
Solitary, dreadful, where, without anyone's interference,
Grief, love, madness, and hunger consume me.
Where can I cleanse myself of this horrid crime
That I, abominable monster, committed against my lady?
Did I take her by force, and with this force violate
Myself, her love, and her very life,
So as to offer her as prey, simply to make
(Ungrateful cruelty!) the one she hates most her lord?
- Oh Earth, open your breast! Oh sky, unleash your thunderbolt,
And my most grievous betrayal will turn quickly into powder!
I conquered the lady, and another will have her.
I won the battle, another will glory in it.
As for you, bulls, you will not graze the plains;
As for you, sheep, you will not wear wool;
And bees, in the fields you will not make honey;
As for you, birds, in the trees you will not nest.
- Oh eternal regret, heartbreaking sorrow, jealousy:
These are what rightly grip my detestable soul!
Let us die soon, let us hurry, let us not stay here,
Let us go see the blackened kingdom of Hades:
I have nothing left in the world but evil and langour,
What once gave me pleasure now overwhelms me with pain.
- Farewell breastplate, helmet, cuisses,⁷ greaves, armbands,
Farewell shield, sword, bloodied tools of Mars⁸
With which Hector of Troy once armed himself for war:
I will no longer see you, buried underground.
And you, my mistress, farewell, farewell, my mistress, alas!
Forgive me my guilt, and think of me no longer.

1165 J'ay failli, j'ay forfait, il faut qu'on me punisse,
 Je soumets corps et ame à tout aspre supplice :
 Je ne refuse rien, pourveu que mon tourment
 Tire de vostre cœur tout mescontentement :
 Que vous me pardonnez devant que je trespasse,
 1170 Si que mourir je puisse en vostre bonne grace.

SCENE III

BRADAMANTE, HIPPALQUE.

BRADAMANTE.

Hà fille miserable et regorgeant de maux !
 O du Sort outrageux trop outrageux assauts !
 O malheureuse vie en miseres plongee !
 O mon ame, ô mon ame, à jamais affligee !
 1175 Que feray-je ? où iray-je ? et que diray-je plus ?
 Je suis prise à mes rets, je suis prise à ma glus.
 Ah Bradamante, où est ta proïesse guerriere ?
 Où est plus ta vigueur et ta force premiere ?
 Bras traistres, traistre acier, et pourquoy n'avez-vous
 1180 Poussé dans son gosier la roideur de vos coups ?
 Une goutte de sang n'est de son corps sortie,
 Nulle escaille ne lame est de son lieu partie :
 Il n'a point chancelé, ferme comme une tour
 Que la mer abayante assaut tout alentour.
 1185 Et folle je pensois ne trouver rien sur terre
 Que Roger seulement, qui me vainquist en guerre :
 Toutefois ce Gregeois qui n'est pareil à luy,
 Qui n'acquist onc honneur, m'a domtee aujourd'hui.
 Las ! Roger, où es-tu ? où es-tu, ma chere ame ?
 1190 Où es-tu, mon Roger ! en vain je te reclame,
 Tu n'entens à mes cris. Es-tu seul des mortels
 Qui n'ayes entendu publier mes cartels ?
 Chacun l'a sceu, Roger : les peuples Iberides,
 Les Mores, les Persans, les Getes, les Colchides :
 1195 Et tu l'ignores seul, cela toy seul ne sçais
 Qu'espandre pour toy seul par le monde je fais.

HIPPALQUE.

Hé mon Dieu, que vous sert ceste larmeuse plainte ?
 Pourquoi vous gesnez-vous d'une chose contrainte ?
 Pourquoi plorez-vous tant ? que soupirez-vous tant ?
 1200 Pensez-vous le malheur rompre en vous tourmentant ?

I faltered, I gave up, someone must punish me,
 I submit body and soul to this bitter punishment:
 I refuse nothing, so long as my torment
 Draws all offense from your heart:
 May you forgive me before I pass away,
 So that in death I might be in your good graces.

SCENE III

BRADAMANTE, HIPPALQUE.

BRADAMANTE.

You desolate wretch, overflowing with troubles!
 Oh outrageous attacks from an unreasonable destiny!
 Oh unhappy life plunged into misery!
 Oh my soul, oh my soul forever afflicted!
 What will I do? Where will I go? And what will I say?
 I am trapped in my own nets, I am caught in birdlime.⁹
 Ah Bradamante, where is your warrior's bravery?
 Where is your vigor and your inborn strength?
 Disloyal arms, disloyal steel, and why did you not
 Plunge the strength of your blows into his throat?
 Not a drop of blood flowed from his body,
 Not one scale¹⁰ or blade left its place.
 Nothing wavered; he was steady like a tower
 That the roaring sea assaults from every side.
 And blindly I thought I would find on this Earth
 Only Roger, who conquered me in battle:
 Yet this Greek, who has no equal, and
 Who never gained honor, has tamed me today.
 Alas! Roger, where are you, where are you, my dear soul?
 Where are you, my Roger! I call out for you in vain;
 You do not heed my cries. Are you the only mortal
 Who has not heard my challenges proclaimed?
 Everyone knew it, Roger: The Iberians,
 The Moors, the Persians, the Dacians, the Colchians:¹¹
 And you alone are unaware, you alone do not know of
 This world of mine, made for you alone to populate.

HIPPALQUE.

Oh my God, what purpose does this tearful lament serve?
 Why do you upset yourself with a matter beyond control?
 Why do you cry so much? Why do you sigh so much?
 Do you intend to break this sadness by tormenting yourself?

BRADAMANTE.

Ma compagne m'amie, hé que j'ay de tristesse !
Le dueil, l'amour, la haine et la crainte m'opresse :
Je suis au desespoir, au desespoir je suis :
Je n'ay plus que la mort pour borner mes ennuis.

HIPPALQUE.

1205 » Ne vous desolez point. Il n'y a maladie,
» Tant soit-elle incurable, où lon ne remedie :
» Il fault prendre courage et tousjours esperer.
Dieu vous peut (s'il luy plaist) de ces malheurs tirer.

BRADAMANTE.

Et comment ? quel moyen ? qu'à Leon j'obeisse
1210 Par ses armes vaincue, et sois Imperatrice ?
Hà non ! plustost la mort se coule dans mon sein,
Et plustost me puissé-je enfermer de ma main,
Que d'estre oncques à luy : j'en suis là resolute.
Je sçay que d'un chacun j'en seray mal-voulue :
1215 Charles s'en fâchera, et mon pere sur tous
Vomira contre moy le fiel de son courroux.
Je seray justement inconstante estimee,
Des Grecs et des François impudente nommee :
Leon j'offenseray : mais tout m'est plus leger
1220 Et de moindre peché que d'offenser Roger.

HIPPALQUE.

Je voy Marphise seule, allons par devers elle :
Elle en pourra possible avoir quelque nouvelle.

SCENE IIII

MARPHISE, BRADAMANTE, HIPPALQUE.

MARPHISE.

Quelle fureur, mon frere, a vostre esprit espoind
De quitter vostre Dame et ne la revoir point ?
1225 D'abandonner la Cour, et moy vostre germaine,
Me laissant en destresse, et Bradamante en peine ?
La pauvre Bradamante, hà que j'en ay pitié !
Jamais ne fut, je croy, plus constante amitié.
Las ! que sera-ce d'elle ? Elle avoit esperance
1230 Qu'au bruit de son cartel vous reviendriez en France :
Un chacun l'estimoit, son pere en avoit peur,

BRADAMANTE.

My people love me, and yet how sad I feel!
Grief, love, hate, and fear all weigh upon me:
I am in despair; I have become despair itself.
I have nothing but death to curtail my worries.

HIPPALQUE.

» Do not destroy yourself. There is no illness,
» Except something incurable, that cannot be remedied:
» You must be courageous and ever hopeful.
God can (if it pleases Him) pull you from these troubles.

BRADAMANTE.

How ? By what means ? Should I yield to Leon,
Defeated by his might, and become his Empress ?
No ! Death should sooner slip into my breast,
My hand should sooner be shackled
Than ever be his : I am resigned to it.
I know that everyone will scorn me :
Charles will be angry about it, and above all my father
Will spew the venom of his wrath upon me.
Understandably, I will be seen as capricious,
Both the Greeks and French will call me shameless :
I will offend Leon : but all of this is minor to me
And less of a sin than offending Roger.

HIPPALQUE.

I see Marphise alone, let us go toward her :
She might have some news concerning the matter.

SCENE IIII

MARPHISE, BRADAMANTE, HIPPALQUE.

MARPHISE.

What madness, my brother, moves your soul
To leave your lady and never see her again ?
To abandon the court, and your kin,
Leaving me in distress, and Bradamante in pain ?
Poor Bradamante, how I pity her situation !
Never was there, I believe, more constant kindness.
Alas ! What will become of her ? She had hope
That upon hearing her challenge you would return to France :
Everyone supposed it, her father feared it,

Qui a tant ce Leon et son Empire au cœur :
Et ores la pauvrete, et mocquee, et trompee,
Est la femme du Grec par le droit de l'espee.

BRADAMANTE.

1235 Dieu m'en garde, ma sœur, je veux plustost mourir.

MARPHISE.

Helas ! que je voudrois vous pouvoir secourir.
Mais quoy ? tout est perdu, que sçaurions-nous plus faire ?
La peine en est à vous, et la coulpe à mon frere.
Prenez-le fort en gré, c'est Dieu qui l'a permis.

1240 Leon vous doit avoir, puis qu'on luy a promis.

BRADAMANTE.

Jamais, ma sœur.

MARPHISE.

Mais quoy ? seroit-il raisonnable ?

BRADAMANTE.

Le soit, ou ne le soit, mon cœur est immuable.

MARPHISE.

Quelle excuse aurez-vous de ne le faire pas ?

BRADAMANTE.

J'auray pour mon excuse un violent trespas.

MARPHISE.

1245 Un trespas ! et pourquoy ? n'avancés point vostre heure.

BRADAMANTE.

Je mourray, je mourray, je n'ay chose meilleure.

MARPHISE.

Et que diroit Roger entendant vostre mort ?

BRADAMANTE.

Que morte je seray pour ne luy faire tort.

MARPHISE.

Mais il auroit causé vostre mort outrageuse.

He who takes Leon and his empire to heart:
And now the wretch, mocked and deceived,
Is the woman, thanks to the might of the Greek sword.

BRADAMANTE.

Heaven help me, my sister, I would rather die.

MARPHISE.

Alas! How I wish I could help you.
But how? All is lost, What more could we do?
The pain is yours, and the blame is my brother's.
Let us take it in stride, it is God who permitted it.
Leon ought to have you, since you were promised to him.

BRADAMANTE.

Never, my sister.

MARPHISE.

But why? Would it not be reasonable?

BRADAMANTE.

Whatever the case, my mind is made up.

MARPHISE.

What excuse will you have not to do it?

BRADAMANTE.

I will have as my excuse a violent death.

MARPHISE.

Death! Why? Do not cut your time short.

BRADAMANTE.

I am dying, I am dying, I do not have anything better.

MARPHISE.

And what would Roger say upon hearing of your death?

BRADAMANTE.

That I will have died so as not to wrong him.

MARPHISE.

27 But he would have caused your untimely, outrageous death.

BRADAMANTE.
 1250 Non, ainçois la fortune à mon bien envieuse.

MARPHISE.
 Il mourroit à l'instant qu'il sçauroit vostre fin.

BRADAMANTE.
 J'ay peur qu'il soit desja de la mort le butin.

MARPHISE.
 Non est pas, si Dieu plaist, il en seroit nouvelle.

BRADAMANTE.
 S'il vit, il est épris de quelque amour nouvelle.

MARPHISE.
 1255 N'ayez peur qu'il soit onc d'autre amour retenu.

BRADAMANTE.
 Qu'au bruit de ce combat n'est-il donques venu ?

MARPHISE.
 Helas, je n'en sçay rien, j'ay peur qu'il soit malade.

BRADAMANTE.
 Leon luy auroit bien dressé quelque embuscade,
 Comme il est fraudulent, et l'auroit pris, de peur
 1260 Qu'il fust à son dommage encontre moy vainqueur.

HIPPALQUE.
 Je sçay bien un moyen pour brouiller tout l'affaire.

MARPHISE.
 Et quel ? ma grand amie.

BRADAMANTE.
 Et que faudroit-il faire ?

MARPHISE.
 Je volle toute d'aise.

BRADAMANTE.
 Hippalque, mon amour.

BRADAMANTE.
 No, but destiny covets my earthly being.

MARPHISE.
 Roger will die the moment he learns of your demise.

BRADAMANTE.
 I fear that he has already become Death's prize.

MARPHISE.
 He has not, God forbid, there would be news of it.

BRADAMANTE.
 If he lives, he is possessed by some new love.

MARPHISE.
 Do not worry that he will ever be entrapped by another love.

BRADAMANTE.
 Given news of the battle, why has he not arrived yet?

MARPHISE.
 Alas, I know nothing, but I fear that he is ill.

BRADAMANTE.
 Leon would have set up some ambush for him,
 Cunning as he is. He would have taken Roger for fear
 That Roger is against him, which would hinder him.

HIPPALQUE.
 I know a way to complicate this affair.

MARPHISE.
 What would that be, my dear friend?

BRADAMANTE.
 And what would we do?

MARPHISE.
 I want you to be at ease, Bradamante.

BRADAMANTE.
 Hippalque, my dear.

MARPHISE.

Mon cœuret, je te pry, fay nous quelque bon tour.

HIPPALQUE.

- 1265 La fourbe est bien aisee, il faut que vous, Marphise,
Allez vers l'Empereur, et que de galantise
Soustenez qu'on fait tort à vostre frere absent,
Mariant Bradamante, et la luy ravissant,
Veu qu'ils ont devant vous par paroles expresses
1270 Fait de s'entre-espouser l'un à l'autre promesses :
Qu'un sceptre ne doit pas la faire varier,
Qu'on ne la scauroit plus à d'autres marier :
Que si par arrogance elle veut contredire,
Les armes en la main soustiendrez vostre dire.
1275 Bradamante y sera qui, le front abbaissant,
Ira par son maintien vos propos confessant :
Lors Charles et ses Pairs, ne voulans faire outrage
A Roger, suspendront ce dernier mariage.
Il viendra ce pendant, ou quelque autre moyen
1280 Se pourra presenter commode à nostre bien.

MARPHISE.

J'approuve ce conseil : car si Leon s'y treuve,
Il faudra qu'avec moy par honneur il s'espreuve
Pour defendre sa cause, et j'espere qu'après
Vous n'aurez plus de mal de luy, ny d'autres Grecs.

SCENE V

LEON, CHARLES, AYMON, MARPHISE, BEATRIX.

LEON.

- 1285 Magnanime Empereur, dont le nom venerable
Est aus fiers Sarrasins et aus Turcs redoutable,
Qui le sceptre François faites craindre par tout
D'un bout de l'Univers jusques à l'autre bout,
Et qui ce grand Paris, vostre cité Royale,
1290 En majesté rendez aux deux Rommes egale :
Heureuse est vostre France, et moy plein de grand heur
De m'estre ici trouvé pour voir vostre grandeur,
Et d'avoir eu de vous tesmoignage honorable
Au prix de ma valeur, qui vous est redevable.

MARPHISE.

My dear, I ask you, give us some sort of clue.

HIPPALQUE.

The scheme is very easy: You must, Marphise,
Go the Emperor, and courageously
Insist they are doing an injustice to your absent brother,
By marrying off Bradamante and spoiling her for him.
Seeing that he and she, in front of you, explicitly
Promised to marry one another:
A scepter ought not change her,
So that she could no longer be wed to others:
If, through arrogance, she wishes to contradict all of this,
You will maintain your word with weapons in hand.
Bradamante will give into this and, head bowed,
Will be led by her propriety to avow your proposal:
Then Charles and his Peers, not wanting to wrong
Roger, will postpone this recent marriage.
Meanwhile, Roger will come, or some other way
Will conveniently present itself in our favor.

MARPHISE.

I approve this advice: because if Leon finds himself in that position,
He must prove himself to me on his honor
To uphold his cause, and I hope that afterward
You will no longer harbor ill-will for him, nor for other Greeks.

SCENE V

LEON, CHARLES, AYMON, MARPHISE, BEATRIX.

LEON.

Great Emperor, whose venerable name
Brings dread to proud Saracens and Turks,¹²
Whose French scepter inspires fear
From one end of the universe to the other,
And whose immense Paris, your royal city,
Brings majesty equal to two Romes:
France is lucky under you, and I, too, am filled with good fortune
To have found myself here to witness your greatness,
And to have received your honorable testimony
As a reward for my valor, which is indebted to you.

CHARLES.

- 1295 Mon fils, vostre vertu s'est monstree à nos yeux,
Comme l'alme clairté d'un Soleil radieux :
Ma voix ne la sçauroit rendre plus heroique.
» Le tesmoignage est vain en chose si publique.
Vrayment vous meritez d'un Auguste le nom,
1300 Et meritez aussi d'estre gendre d'Aymon,
Bradamante espousant, que vostre vaillantise
Et vostre ferme amour a doublement conquise.

LEON.

Sire, vous plaist-il pas la faire icy venir,
Pour de nostre nopçage ensemble convenir ?

CHARLES.

- 1305 Je le veux. Hà voicy le bon Duc de Dordonne,
Noble sang de Clairmont qui vous affectionne,
Vostre race et vaillance il honore : et voici
La Duchesse sa femme, et Bradamante aussi.
Vous, Aymon, sçavez bien que le prince de Grece,
1310 Aussi grand en vertu comme il est en noblesse,
Poursuit vostre alliance, et s'est acquis vainqueur
En publique combat vostre fille, son cœur :
Ore voulez-vous pas vos promesses conclure,
Et determiner jour pour la nopce future ?

AYMON.

- 1315 Ouy, Sire : Je n'ay rien qui me plaise si fort
Que me voir allié d'un prince si accort :
Je me sens bien-heureux, et Bradamante heureuse
D'entrer en une race et noble et valeureuse.

LEON.

- Moy plus heureux encor, d'avoir une beauté
1320 Dont mon cœur si long temps idolâtre a esté :
Et qui vraye Amazone est aussi belliqueuse
(Rare faveur du ciel) que belle et gracieuse.
Puis elle est d'un estoc d'hommes vaillants et forts,
Les premiers de la terre en Martiaus efforts,
1325 De Renauts, de Rolands, les foudres dé la guerre,
D'Ogers et d'Oliviers, plus craints que le tonnerre.

CHARLES.

My son, your virtue has appeared before our eyes
Like the beautiful light of a radiant sun:
I could not say it more heroically.
» Testimony is useless in something so public.
Truly you deserve the title of Augustus,
And deserve also to be Aymon's son-in-law, and
Bradamante's spouse: Your exploits
And your steadfast love have conquered her two-fold.

LEON.

Sire, does it not please you to come,
In order to bring this marriage together?

CHARLES.

I indeed want it. Ah, here is the good Duke of Dordogne,
Noble blood of Clairmont's house, who is fond of you,
Your family and your valor; and here are
The Duchess his wife, and Bradamante as well.
You, Aymon, know indeed that the prince of Greece,
As virtuous as he is noble,
Haunts your marriage, and has attained,
In public combat, your daughter and her heart:
Now do you not want to resolve your promises,
And determine the date of this forthcoming wedding?

AYMON.

Yes, Sire: Nothing would please me more
Than to see myself allied with such a galant prince:
I feel unbelievably happy, and Bradamante will be thrilled
To join such a noble and valiant family.

LEON.

I am happier still, to have a beauty
Which my heart has idolized for so long:
And who, a true Amazon, is as warlike
As she is beautiful and gracious (a rare favor from heaven).
Then again, she comes from a long line of strong, valiant men,
The first on Earth to engage in Martian¹³ efforts,
The Renauts, the Rolands, the lightning bolts of war,
The Ogers and Oliviers, more feared than thunder.

CHARLES.

Tout l'Orient n'est point en gemmes si fecond,
Qu'est en hommes guerriers la race de Clairmont.
Jadis le cheval Grec n'eut les entrailles pleines
1330 De tant de bons soldats et de bons Capitaines,
Que de cette famille il en sort tous les jours
Indomtez de courage aux bellicieux estours.
La loy de Jesus-Christ par eux est maintenue,
Et la fureur Payenne en ses bords retenue :
1335 Comme un torrent enflé, qui par la plaine bruit
Et ja prez et jardins de ses ondes destruit,
Entraineroit maisons, granges, moulins, estables,
S'il n'estoit arresté par rempars defensables,
Qui rompent sa fureur, et ne permettent pas
1340 Qu'il desborde, et s'espande aux endroits les plus bas.

AYMON.

C'est par vostre vertu que cette heureuse France
Sert encor' Jesus-Christ, vous estes sa defense.

CHARLES.

La puissance Chrestienne accroistra de moitié
Par ce nœu conjugal, qui joint nostre amitié :
1345 Quand l'un et l'autre Empire unissant ses armées
Guerroyra les Payens aux terres Idumees,
Ou en la chaude Egypte, en l'Afrique, et aux bords
De l'Espagne indomtee, où j'ay fait tant d'efforts.

BEATRIX.

Mais pensons d'ordonner du jour du mariage,
1350 A fin qu'on se prepare et mette en equipage.

LEON.

Ce ne sera si tost que j'en ay de desir.

AYMON.

Sire, il depend de vous, s'il vous plaist le choisir.

CHARLES.

Je veux que par tout soit la feste publice.

MARPHISE.

Il n'est pas raisonnable, elle est ja mariee.

CHARLES.

The entire Orient is not as rich in jewels
As the Clairmont family is in warriors.
Long ago, the Greek horse was not filled with entrails
As with so many fine soldiers and captains,
So, now, is this family, which goes out every day
With an indomitable spirit to warlike encounters.
They uphold the law of Christ,
And ward off the Pagan fury on all sides:
Like a swollen torrent, which, roaring through the plain,
Nearly destroying meadows and gardens with its waves,
Would carry houses, barns, windmills, and stables
If it were not stopped by invincible ramparts,
Which break its fury, and do not allow
It to overflow and spread itself into the lowest lands.

AYMON.

It is through your virtue that fortunate France
Once again serves Christ; you are his defense.

CHARLES.

Christian strength will increase by half
From this conjugal knot that binds our friendship:
When both Empires unite their defenses
To wage war upon the Pagans in the Edomite¹⁴ lands,
Or in hot Egypt, in Africa, and on the shores
Of unconquerable Spain, where I focused so many of my efforts.

BEATRIX.

But let us think about setting the marriage date,
So that we might prepare and carry out our plans.

LEON.

It cannot come quickly enough for me.

AYMON.

Sire, it depends on you, if you would please make a choice.

CHARLES.

I want the feast to be announced everywhere.

MARPHISE.

31 That is unreasonable, she is already married.

AYMON, BEATRIX.
1355 Mariee ? et à qui ? elle ne le fut onc,
Jamaïs n'en fut parlé.

MARPHISE.
Elle vous trompe donc.

BEATRIX.
Ma fille mariee ?

AYMON.
Il n'en fut onc nouvelle.

BEATRIX.
Sans le respect que j'ay.

CHARLES.
Que sert ceste querelle ?
Bradamante est presente, il la faut enquerir.

AYMON.
1360 Qu'elle disse à qui c'est.

BEATRIX.
Cela me fait mourir.

MARPHISE.
C'est à Roger mon frere.

AYMON, BEATRIX.
O Dieu quelle impudence !

CHARLES.
Comment le sçavez-vous ?

MARPHISE.
Ce fut en ma presence.

BEATRIX.
Ils s'entre-sont promis ?

MARPHISE.
Voire avecque serment.

AYMON, BEATRIX.
Married? To whom? She has never been...
Never was it said.

MARPHISE.
So she fools you.

BEATRIX.
My daughter, married?

AYMON.
It was never announced.

BEATRIX.
Without considering me.

CHARLES.
What good is this argument?
Bradamante is here, we must ask her.

AYMON.
May she say who it is.

BEATRIX.
This is killing me.

MARPHISE.
It is to my brother Roger.

AYMON, BEATRIX.
Oh God, what impudence!

CHARLES.
How do you know this?

MARPHISE.
It happened in my presence.

BEATRIX.
They are promised to one another?

MARPHISE.
Indeed, with an oath.

LEON.

J'ay tousjours entendu qu'il estoit son amant.

AYMON, BEATRIX.

1365 O qu'elle est effrontee !

MARPHISE.

O fille desloyale !

Et faut-il sous couleur d'une Aigle imperiale,

D'un sceptre, d'un tiare ainsi vous oublier ?

O que l'ambition fait nos ames plier !

CHARLES.

Mais qu'en dit Bradamante ?

MARPHISE.

Et que peut elle dire ?

CHARLES.

1370 Levez un peu le front.

AYMON.

Ne la croyez pas, Sire.

MARPHISE.

Si elle contredit je la veux desfier :

J'ay les armes au poing pour le verifier.

S'y offre qui voudra, je sous tiens obstinee

Qu'elle s'est pour espouse à mon frere donnee :

1375 Et que l'on ne sçauroit, qui ne luy fera tort,

A d'autres la donner jusqu'à tant qu'il soit mort.

CHARLES.

Elle ne respond rien.

MARPHISE.

Elle se sent coupable,

Et reconnoist assez mon dire veritable.

AYMON.

C'est une pure fraude ourdie encontre moy.

1380 Bradamante à Roger n'a point donné sa foy,

Aussi ne pouvoit-elle, estant en ma puissance.

LEON.

I always heard he was her lover.

AYMON, BEATRIX.

Oh, how shameless she is!

MARPHISE.

Oh disloyal girl!

So, under the guise of an imperial eagle,

Scepter, and tiara, you must forget who you are?

Oh how ambition can bend our souls!

CHARLES.

But what does Bradamante say about it?

MARPHISE.

What can she say?

CHARLES.

Raise your face a little.

AYMON.

Do not believe it, Sire.

MARPHISE.

If she contradicts me, I want to challenge her:

I have a pistol in order to confirm it.

May whoever would like to offer a challenge do so; I firmly uphold

That she gave herself as a wife to my brother:

And let it be known that whoever wrongs her,

Will himself be wronged by others until he is dead.

CHARLES.

She is saying nothing.

MARPHISE.

She feels guilty,

And recognizes well enough the truth in my words.

AYMON.

This is a pure fraud contrived against me.

Bradamante never gave herself to Roger,

33 Nor could she, being under my jurisdiction.

Une telle promesse est de nulle importance.
 Puis, où fut-ce? quand fut-ce? estoit-il ja Chrestien ?
 Il n'y a que deux jours qu'il combattoit, Payen,
 1385 Nos peuples baptisez : or, estant infidelle,
 Il ne pouvoit avoir d'alliance avec elle.
 C'est abus, c'est abus, jamais n'en fut rien dit :
 Au contraire elle mesme a pratiqué l'edit
 Qui a conduit Leon, un si notable prince,
 1390 Depuis le bord Gregeois jusqu'en cette province,
 Pour entrer en bataille : et ore estant vainqueur,
 Qu'on le vienne frauder par un propos mocqueur,
 Une baye, un affront, et sur tout que vous, Sire,
 Veuillez pour tout cela revoquer vostre dire,
 1395 Il est deraisonnable : il faut que le combat,
 Faict aux yeux d'un chacun, ait voidé tout debat.

CHARLES.

Je ne veux rien resoudre en affaire si grande,
 Que des gens de conseil advis je ne demande.
 » Un Roy qui tout balance au poix de l'équité,
 1400 » Doit juger toute chose avecque meureré.

MARPHISE.

Puisque cette pucelle à Roger s'est donnee,
 Leon ne peut l'avoir sous un juste Hymenee
 Tant que Roger vivra : qu'ils se battent tous deux
 A la lance et l'espee, et cil qui vaincra d'eux
 1405 Son rival envoyé là bas chez Rhadamante,
 Ait sans aucun debat l'amour de Bradamante.

AYMON.

Ce n'est pas la raison, Leon a combatu,
 Son droit suffisamment est par luy debatu.

MARPHISE.

Que vous nuist ce combat?

AYMON.

Il serait inutile.
 1410 Car vainqueur ou vaincu Roger n'aura ma fille.

LEON.

J'accepte le party : non non, ne craignez point :

Such a vow is of no importance.
 Furthermore, where was this? When? Was he already Christian?
 Only two days ago he was fighting, as a Pagan,
 Against our baptized people: but, being treacherous,
 He could have married her.
 It is deceit, pure deceit, never was anything said:
 On the contrary, she even practiced the edict
 That guided Leon, one such notable prince,
 From the Grecian shore into this province,
 To enter into battle. And now, victorious,
 Might one come to fraud him for a mocking purpose:
 A lie, an affront, and above all you, Sire,
 If you would please revoke your word on account of all this,
 It is unreasonable: The battle, having taken place
 In full view of everyone, must void all further discussion.

CHARLES.

I want nothing but to resolve an affair so large,
 But I have not asked the advice of my council.
 » A king who weighs everything with equality
 » Must judge everything with maturity.

MARPHISE.

Since this maiden was given to Roger,
 Leon cannot rightly marry her
 So long as Roger lives: might the two battle each other
 By lance and sword, and he who defeats
 His rival will send him there to Rhadamanthus,¹⁵
 Will have Bradamante's love without debate.

AYMON.

That is not right; Leon fought, and
 His right has been sufficiently established by him.

MARPHISE.

Might this battle offend you?

AYMON.

It would be useless.
 Whether victor or victim, Roger will not have my daughter.

LEON.

34 I accept the match: no, no, do not worry:

J'ay pour luy cet estoc, qui tousjours trenche et poind.
Sire, permettez moy d'entrer encore en lice,
Et que de s'y trouver Roger on advertisse.

CHARLES.

1415 Je desire plustost par douceur accorder
Vos differens esmeus que de vous hasarder.
Je ne veux pas vous perdre, estans de tel merite,
Tous deux braves guerriers et champions d'elite.
Ce seroit grande perte à nostre Chrestienté
1420 Que l'un de vous mourust outre necessité.

LEON.

Dieu dispose de tout, il donra la victoire
A celui qu'il voudra, l'autre au Styx ira boire
Marphise, c'est à vous de faire icy trouver
Vostre Roger, à fin de nous entresprouver.

SCENE VI

LEON, BASILE, DUC D'ATHENES

LEON.

1425 Quand ce seroit Renaut, quand seroit Roland mesme,
Que le ciel a doué d'une force suprême,
Je l'oserois combattre, ayant ce chevalier,
Qui est plus mille fois que nul autre guerrier,
Il n'a point de pareil : que ce beau Roger vienne,
1430 Et l'espee à la main ses promesses soustienne,
Il luy fera bien tost son ardeur appaiser,
Et au lieu d'une amie une tombe espouser :
Mais voyla pas Basile, honneur de nostre Grece,
A qui tous mes secrets fidellement j'adresse ?
1435 Basile mon amy, je me viens d'engager
De promesse à la Cour, de combattre Roger.

BASILE.

Roger, ce grand Achille, à qui la France toute
Ne sçauroit opposer Paladin qu'il redoute !

LEON.

C'est ce mesme Roger.

I have this rapier for him that always digs in and bites.
Sire, allow me once again to enter the tournament,
In order to find there Roger, who has been admonished.

CHARLES.

Instead, I kindly ask you to reconcile
Your agitated differences that jeopardize you.
I do not want to lose you, being of such worth,
Two brave warriors and elite champions.
This would be a great loss to our Christian cause
If one of you died unnecessarily.

LEON.

God arranges everything, He will give victory
To the one who wishes it; the other will drink from Styx.¹⁶
Marphise, it is up to you to find
Your Roger, in order to prove this to us.

SCENE VI

LEON, BASILE, DUC D'ATHENES

LEON.

Seeing that it would be Renaut, even Roland,
Whom the heavens have endowed with supreme strength,
I would dare do combat with him, having this knight,
Who is a thousand times greater than any other warrior;
He has no equal. Let this illustrious Roger come,
And keep his promises, sword in hand:
He will soon pacify his burning desire,
And instead of a friend he will marry a headstone.
But do not look here Basile, glory of our Greece,
To whom do I faithfully address all my secrets?
Basile my friend, I have just received
The word of the court, to do battle with Roger.

BASILE.

Roger, the great Achilles, whom all France
Knew could not stand up to a Paladin he fears!

LEON.

It is the same Roger.

BASILE.
Il n'est pas à la Cour.

BASILE.
He is not at court.

1440 LEON.
Sa sœur Marphise y est.

LEON.
His sister Marphise is there.

BASILE.
Est-ce un combat d'amour?

BASILE.
Is this a battle of love?

LEON.
C'est pour ma Bradamante.

LEON.
It is for my Bradamante.

BASILE.
Et qui vous la querelle?

BASILE.
And who challenges you for her?

LEON.
Marphise pour Roger.

LEON.
Marphise does, on Roger's behalf.

BASILE.
Que pretend-il en elle ?

BASILE.
What does he claim about her?

LEON.
Il pretend l'espouser.

LEON.
He claims to marry her.

BASILE.
L'espouser ? et comment ?

BASILE.
To marry her? How?

LEON.
Pour luy avoir promis.

LEON.
Because I promised her to him.

BASILE.
J'estime qu'elle ment.

BASILE.
I think she is lying.

1445 LEON.
C'est d'où vient nostre guerre.

LEON.
This is the source of our war.

BASILE.
Et qu'en dit Bradamante ?

BASILE.
And what says Bradamante about it?

LEON.
Elle monstre à son geste en estre consentante.

LEON.
She shows agreement through her actions.

BASILE.

Monsieur, laissez la donc et vous tirez de là.

LEON.

Basile, je ne puis consentir à cela.

BASILE.

Quoy ? voulez-vous mourir pour une ingrate amie ?

LEON.

1450 Je voudrais bien pour elle abandonner la vie.
Je n'entens toutefois combattre contre luy
D'autre sorte que j'ay combattu ce jourdhuy.

BASILE.

Par la force d'un autre ?

LEON.

Ouy bien de celuy mesme
Qui m'a tantost conquis ceste beauté que j'aime.

BASILE.

1455 Il n'est plus avec nous.

LEON.

Et où donc ? ô mon Dieu !

BASILE.

Il s'en est ore allé.

LEON.

Helas ! et en quel lieu ?
Quel chemin a til pris ? qui l'a meu de ce faire ?

BASILE.

Il estoit tout chagrin, et sembloit se desplaire.

LEON.

1460 Hé Dieu je suis perdu ! malheureux, qu'ay-je fait ?
Me voila blasonné de mon deloyal fait.
On sçaura mon diffame, et la tourbe accourue
Du peuple autour de moy me hûra par la rue.
Ces chevaliers François, du monde la terreur,

BASILE.

Sir, leave her and withdraw from here.

LEON.

Basile, I cannot consent to that.

BASILE.

What ? Do you want to die for an ungrateful friend ?

LEON.

I would indeed give up my life for her.
Nevertheless, I understand that fighting against him
Requires a manner different from how I fought today.

BASILE.

Through the force of another ?

LEON.

Indeed, the same one
Who has presently conquered this beauty I love.

BASILE.

He is not with us anymore.

LEON.

Where is he then ? Oh my God !

BASILE.

He has now fled.

LEON.

Alas ! And where ?
What road did he take ? Who moved him to do this ?

BASILE.

He was despondent, and seemed very unhappy with himself.

LEON.

Oh God I am lost ! Miserable person, what have I done ?
Here I am criticized for my disloyal deed.
Everyone will know of my infamy, and the gathered crowd
Of people around me will howl at me in the street.
These French knights, the terror of the world,

Qui ont l'honneur si cher, m'auront tous en horreur.
 1465 Et ma maistresse mesme (ah ! que la terre s'ouvre)
 Crevera de despit, Charles et tout le Louvre
 Se riront bien de moy d'avoir, homme peureux,
 Usurpé le loyer d'un homme valeureux.
 Hà timide poltron, par mon dol je décrie
 1470 Moy, mon pere, ma race, et toute ma patrie !
 J'ay promis de combattre, en autrui me fiant,
 Et du premier succez trop me glorifiant,
 Et faudray de promesse, et la Cour abusee
 Fera de ma vergongne une longue risee.
 1475 Hà chetif !

BASILE.

Mais tandis qu'ici vous souspirez,
 Au lieu de vous guarir, vostre mal empirez.
 Ne perdons point de temps, ains suyvons-le à la trace,
 Et le cherchons par tout courans de place en place.

Having such precious honor, will all loathe me.
 And my same mistress (Ah! How the ground opens up)
 Will break apart in spite, Charles and all the Louvre
 Will indeed laugh at me, a fearful man.
 Having usurped the reward of a valiant man.
 Oh cowardly scoundrel, because of my deceit I curse
 Myself, my father, my people, and my entire country!
 I promised to fight, with others trusting me to do it,
 And boasting too much from my initial success,
 I will have to keep my promise, and the wronged court
 Will laugh long and hard at my shame.
 Alas, wretched warrior that I am!

BASILE.

But while you sigh here,
 Instead of curing yourself, your ills are growing worse.
 Let us not lose any time, instead let us follow in his footsteps,
 And let us look for him, scouring from place to place.

Endnotes

1. "The twelve most illustrious knights of Charlemagne were called Peers, for the equality that reigned among them; while the name of Paladins, also conferred on them, implies that they were inmates of the palace and companions of the king." Bulfinch, Thomas. *The Age of Fable*. New York: Review of Reviews, 1913; Bartleby.com, 2000. www.bartleby.com/bulfinch/.
2. "This wind called in Provence Bise, is the Circius of the ancients, mentioned by Seneca, Pliny, Diodorus, and Strabo. Diodorus in the Fifth Book of his history, says, "The wind blows with so much impetuosity that it raises up stones larger than the fist and clouds of gravel. It is so violent that it carries away the arms and clothing from the soldiers and throws over horses and their riders." Inglis, Henry D. *Switzerland, the south of France, and the Pyrenees in M.DCCC.XXX*. Edinburgh: Constable & Co., 1831. p.50
3. "The naval side-arm, a short cutting sword with a slightly curved blade, and a solid basket-shaped guard (see Sword). The word is derived from [the Latin word for] a ploughshare, or cutting instrument." "Cutlass." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Eleventh Edition. 1911.
4. "Le Ténare est un cap à l'extrémité du Péloponèse; il s'y tyrouvait une caverne, considérée comme une entrée des enfers. [Tenaro is a cape at the southern tip of Peloponnese; a cavern can be found there, considered to be the entrance to the underworld.] Hervier, Marcel. Robert Garnier. *Bradamante : Tragécomédie*. Introduction, notes, grammaire et lexique. Paris: Editions Garnier Frères, 1949. p. 134
5. The Catherine Wheel, a medieval torture device named for St. Catherine of Alexandria, whose touch is said to have destroyed the wheel which was to kill her. Clugnet, Léon. "St. Catherine of Alexandria." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 3. New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. 29 Apr. 2009
6. Cuisses, cuissards, or cuissarts, are "pieces covering the thighs"; Greaves are "plate armor to protect the shins." Huston, Mary G. *Medieval Costume in England and France: The 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1996. pp. 125, 223.
7. Mars, "[an] ancient Roman deity, in importance second only to Jupiter." "Mars." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2009. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*.
8. Birdlime, "a sticky substance usually made from the bark of a holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) that is smeared on twigs to snare small birds." *Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary*. 2009.

10. Iberian: a member of one or more peoples anciently inhabiting the Caucasus in Asia between the Black and Caspian seas; Moor: one of the Arab and Berber conquerors of Spain; Persian: a member of one of the peoples forming the modern Iranian nationality; Dacian: ancient country and Roman province of southeastern Europe, roughly equivalent to Romania and Bessarabia; Colchian: ancient country bordering on Black Sea, south of Caucasus Mountains; now western part of Republic of Georgia. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary. 2009.
11. Saracen: a member of a nomadic people of the deserts between Syria and Arabia. Taken with Turk, broadly refers to Arab Muslims of that area. Ibid.
12. Martian refers to the Marcius, a group of families in ancient Rome that spawned several military and political figures. Ibid.
13. Edomite: a member of a Semitic people living south of the Dead Sea in biblical times. Ibid.
14. Rhadamanthus is “a judge of the underworld in Greek mythology.” Ibid.
15. The Styx is “the principal river of the underworld in Greek mythology.” Ibid.